(c) whether Government would assure of commencing this work on a war-footing at least at this stage; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Cantonment Board Secunderabad have approved the estimates for reconstruction of the road culvert at Wellington Road near Laxminagar, Picket amounting to Rs. 9,75,000.00 vide their Resolution No: 17(5), dated 29.12.2003. Instructions have been issued to expedite the work.

Private participation in defence production

37. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Letters of Intent issued to private manufatcuring companies to produce Defence Products;

(b) total FDI in Defence sector since May, 2001, when it was opened for private participation; and

(c) the details of areas that are coered for private people to manufacture the Defence items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) 23 Letters of Intent/Industrial Licences have so far been issued to private companies for manufacturing various types of defence equipment.

(b) NIL

(c) The defence industry sector is open up to 100% for Indian private sector participation subject to licensing.

Participation of private sector in defence production

38. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are taken to increase private sector participation in defence production;

(b) at present, what is the level of private sector in defence production in volume and percentage terms;

(c) what steps have taken to simplify the procedures to involve private sector, so far; and

(d) the details of results achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) In May 2001, the defence industry sector was opened up to 100% for Indian private sector participation with FDI permissible up to 26% both subject to licensing.

(b) The level of private sector participation in defence production in the Defence Public Sector Undertakings and Ordnance Factories during the year 2004-05 in terms of value has been of the order of Rs. 1,901 crore and Rs. 2,177 crore, respectively, which works out to about 19% for Defence PSUs and 68% in the case of Ordnance Factories of the total purchases made by them.

(c) and (d) Detailed guidelines in the form of Press Note No. 2 (2002 Series) dated 4th January 2002 hae been issued by the Department of Industrial policy & Promotion in consultation with the Ministry of Defence for licensing production of arms and ammunition. So far, 23 Letters of Intent/Industrial Licences have been issued to private companies for manufacture of a wide range of Defence items.

Change in designation of MNS Cadre

39. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an Army proposal to divest the Military Nursing Service Cadre of their rank as officers and replace them with designation such as "Sister" and "Matron";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the rationale of such decisions; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) A ten-member Committee was constituted by the Chief of the Army